

XXXVI, *Description of a new Dorylideous Insect from South Africa belonging to the Genus Ænictus.* By J. O. WESTWOOD, F.L.S., &c.

[Read 5th December, 1842.]

THE attention of Hymenopterologists was a short time ago (namely in the summer of 1840) strongly aroused by the announcement by Mr. Shuckard of the "discovery of an insect belonging to the group typified by *Dorylus* that will," as he expressed himself, "I expect, help to clear up the difficulty which has hitherto attended the completion of these genera, as yet consisting of males only." But though the interest raised by this announcement was great, the question of the nature and relations of these groups was still left almost in statu quo; in fact, the insect in question proved to be the male of a species belonging to another genus of this singular group, affording no clue to the solution of the question in dispute; indeed, the result of Mr. Shuckard's observations rather tended to the assertion of the ordinary bisexual character of *Dorylus* and its allies, and its consequent isolation from the family of the ants. The insect described by Mr. Shuckard was named by him *Ænictus ambiguus*, and was described from specimens collected in India by Colonel Sykes. The geographical range of the species of this group was indeed an interesting fact, for hitherto no *Labidus* has been found but in the new world, although *Dorylus* was known to enjoy a wider range, occurring not only in Africa but also in the East Indies, whence I had a short time previously described a species collected by Mr. Saunders. To this gentleman I have since been indebted for a specimen of *Ænictus ambiguus*, of which species there are specimens in a large collection of Indian insects recently arrived in England, and now offered for sale by a merchant in the city. Previous to the publication of Mr. Shuckard's memoir I had also discovered another species of *Ænictus* in one of the store drawers of the Linnæan Society's Cabinet, which I believe to be also a native of India. Of this species, as well as of several new species of *Labidus*, I published figures and descriptions in my "Arcana Entomologica" (pl. 20), wherein I endeavoured to prove the ant-nature of this group of insects, an opinion which I am happy to learn has been adopted by the distinguished Hymenopterists Drs. Klug and Erichson of Berlin. Under these circumstances I was greatly interested in recently detecting in a collection

of South African insects sent by Mr. Drege to Mr. Saunders an insect belonging to this subfamily, which in several respects seems more fully to confirm the Formicoid character of the group. The insect in question was indeed sent by Mr. Drege as an individual belonging to one of his species of ants, (No. 1485,) of which other specimens (being a true species of *Formica*) were also sent. The insect disagrees in one or two slight respects from Mr. Shuckard's character of *Ænictus*, but I have not thought it necessary to propose a new subgenus for its reception. Of these characters the most striking are the slightly opaque whitish wings, with the veins and stigma almost concolorous with the membrane of the wing; the antennæ gradually attenuated from the fourth or fifth joint, and the very clavate femora to all the feet: the palpi of this insect differ materially from those of *Labidus*.

Ænictus inconspicuus, Westw. (Pl. XIV. fig. 4.)

Nigro-cinereus, pubescens, antennis rufo-piceis, apicibus sensim acuminatis, articulo basali nigro; mandibulis longis, acutis, piceo-rufis, basi nigris; alis fere translucidis, venis stigmatæque fere inconspicuis; pedibus perbrevibus, femoribus clavatis, pedunculo abdominis transverso, antice parum angustiori, disco haud canaliculato.

Long. corp. lin. 4, expans. alar. lin. $6\frac{1}{2}$.

Habitat in Africa australi. Drege.

In Mus. W. W. Saunders.

DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES.

Fig. 4, the insect magnified; 4*a*, the head seen in front; 4*b*, maxilla; 4*c*, labium; 4*d*, antenna; 4*e*, fore foot; 4*f*, unguis and pulvillus; 4*g*, base of the abdomen seen sideways.